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This is a message from the Louisiana Department of Health Emergency Operations Center (LDH EOC). Please share and distribute with relevant stakeholders and partners through your own distribution channels. To remain current on newly released information about the Zika Virus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>.

CDC has released the following updated recommendations for couples:

- Recommendations for pregnant couples. Zika virus infection is of particular concern during pregnancy. Pregnant women with sex partners (male or female) who live in or who have traveled to an area with active Zika virus transmission should consistently and correctly use barriers against infection during sex or abstain from sex for the duration of the pregnancy. These recommendations reduce the risk for sexual transmission of Zika virus during pregnancy, which could have adverse fetal effects. Pregnant women should discuss with their health care provider their own and their sex partner's history of having been in areas with active Zika virus transmission and history of illness consistent with Zika virus disease; providers can consult CDC's guidance for evaluation and testing of pregnant women.
- Recommendations for couples who are not pregnant and are not planning to become pregnant. Several factors could influence a couple's level of concern about sexual transmission of Zika virus. The risk for acquiring mosquito-borne Zika virus infection in areas with active transmission depends on the duration and extent of exposure to infected mosquitoes and the steps taken to prevent mosquito bites. According to currently available information, most Zika virus infections appear to be asymptomatic, and when illness does occur, it is usually mild, with symptoms lasting from several days to a week; severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.

Men and women who want to reduce the risk for sexual transmission of Zika virus should use barrier methods against infection consistently and correctly during sex or abstain from sex when one sex partner has traveled to or lives in an area with active Zika virus transmission. Based on expert opinion and on limited but evolving information about the sexual transmission of Zika virus, the recommended duration of consistent use of a barrier method against infection or abstinence from sex depends on whether the sex partner has confirmed infection or clinical illness consistent with Zika virus disease and whether the sex partner is male or female. The rationale for these time frames has been published previously.

Couples who do not desire pregnancy should use available strategies to prevent unintended pregnancy and might consider multiple options, including (in addition to condoms, the only method that protects against both pregnancy and sexual transmission of Zika virus) use of the most effective contraceptive methods that can be used correctly and consistently. In addition, couples should be advised that correct and consistent use of barrier methods against infection, such as condoms, reduces the risk for other sexually transmitted infections.

Please see the enclosed attachment for the full article on "Interim Guidelines for Prevention of

Sexual Transmission of Zika Virus- United States, July 2016.”

In the state of Louisiana, Zika virus is a reportable disease. To discuss a possible exposure, request laboratory testing, or report a suspected case, contact the Louisiana Office of Public Health at 504-568-8313 or after hours at 800-256-2748.